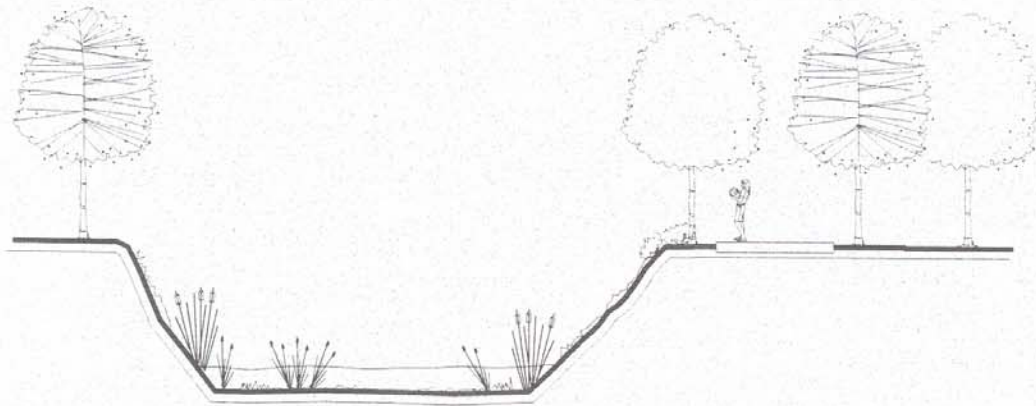

MILPITAS TRAILS MASTER PLAN



Prepared by:
SOKALE/LANDRY COLLABORATIVE

for the
City of Milpitas

Adopted by City Council

June 3, 1997

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Milpitas Trails Master Plan describes and maps the trail corridors recommended for inclusion in the General Plan. Milpitas residents and businesses will directly benefit from the implementation of the Trails Master Plan. An off-street trail system will enhance the quality of life within Milpitas by providing an alternative transportation system, expanding recreational opportunities and improving the environmental conditions of those trail corridors that parallel creeks.



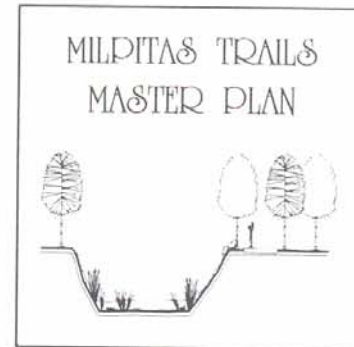
Approximately 37 miles of trails are identified in this report. Of these, 6 miles have been built and 31 miles are proposed for development. The trails are categorized into four groups. Regional Trails are those routes identified in the 1995 *Santa Clara County Trails Master Plan* as having national, state or regional significance. City Trails provide north-south and east-west cross-town routes and extend beyond the city limit to Fremont and San Jose. Neighborhood Trails offer convenient access between residential neighborhoods and local schools and parks. On-Street Connectors consists of on-street bicycle lanes and routes that link segments of the off-street trail system where no other route is available.

This report makes several recommendations to facilitate the implementation of the Trails Master Plan. They include:

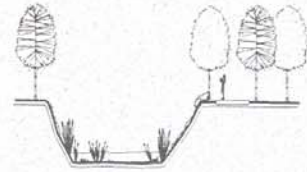
1. Adopt the Milpitas Trails Master Plan Report.
2. Incorporate the findings of the Milpitas Trails Master Plan Report into the Circulation Element of the General Plan and associated environmental clearance documents.
3. Include the top priority trail project in the Five-Year Capital Improvement Program by commissioning a Berryessa Creek Trail feasibility study and associated environmental clearance documents.
4. Develop a Berryessa Creek Trail funding strategy to identify external grant fund sources to assist with trail development.
5. Pursue external grant funds identified in the Berryessa Creek Trail funding strategy.

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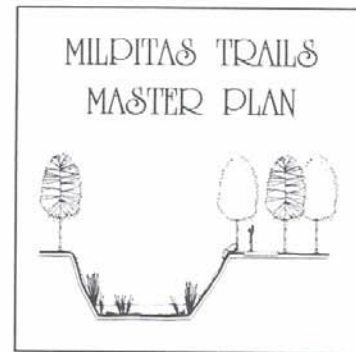
**PURPOSE
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PURPOSE AND METHODS

Trail Planning History

The development of an off-road trail system was initiated by the Bicycle Transportation Advisory Committee to complement the City's on-street bicycle system. On December 20, 1994, the Milpitas City Council directed staff to further define the city's bicycle/pedestrian network. The City Council directed the creation of a Trails Task Force to assist with the development of "a comprehensive plan for citywide bicycle trails for possible consideration in the 1995-99 Capital Improvement Plan." During the following months representatives from the Planning Commission, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Commission, Bicycle Transportation Advisory Committee, County Parks and Recreation Commission and local residents were appointed to the Trails Task Force.

On January 17, 1996, the Trails Task Force convened its first meeting. The Trails Task Force met twice a month for a period of three months. Throughout this time period, members were conducting field visits to potential trail corridors throughout the City noting the disadvantages and advantages of these routes. The product of their efforts was the "Draft Trails Master Plan for the City of Milpitas" (April 15, 1996). This report was reviewed by the City Council who subsequently appropriated funds in the 1996-97 Capital Improvement Program to refine the plan and determine a priority list for future trail development. The Milpitas Trails Master Plan is to be incorporated into the revised Circulation Element of the General Plan scheduled for adoption in late 1997.



Purpose of this Report

This report details the refined Trails Master Plan. It includes mapping appropriate for inclusion in the General Plan, details trail types and the specific corridors included in the plan, offers general feasibility analysis sufficient to recommend corridors for inclusion in the General Plan, prioritizes the trail projects and provides a preliminary budget estimates. This report does not include General Plan policies and strategies for implementing the trail system or provide environmental review under the



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California Environmental Quality Act. These two tasks are being undertaken by City staff in the preparation of the revised Circulation Element. This report also does not include detailed feasibility analyses of each trail corridor. Trail alignment studies must be conducted for each corridor as projects move forward towards development.

Goals of the Trails Master Plan

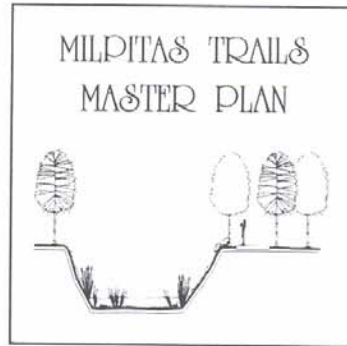
The goals of this plan are derived from the Trails Task Force philosophy that the Trails Master Plan should demonstrate vision, respect and fairness and highlight routes that meet City needs and offer convenience to users. City staff defined the goals based upon this philosophy. These goals apply both to the development of the Trails Master Plan and to the implementation of the trails.

Trails Master Plan Goals

- Identify potential trail routes for commuter and recreational use which integrate with and provide benefit to the creek corridors, schools, businesses, parks and local citizens.
- Provide staging areas and use existing facilities for such staging areas whenever possible.
- Maximize linkages to other trail and bikeway systems to provide alternative transportation routes for pedestrians, bicyclists and joggers.
- Respect the property rights of adjacent landowners and be good neighbors.
- Preserve and restore the natural environment of the creek corridors.
- Coordinate, cooperate and involve all stakeholders along the trail corridors including schools, parks, businesses, agencies, trail users, citizens and adjacent neighbors to maximize public involvement, support and ownership of the trails.
- Provide alternative transportation routes.

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- Establish the character and usage for the trails.
- Provide solutions that maximize the technical, recreational, aesthetic and land use potential for the trail network.
- Prepare a long range development plan for the trail network, consistent with a regional trail concept that considers both active and passive recreation.



Methods of Investigation

This plan builds upon the *Draft Trails Master Plan for the City of Milpitas*. Numerous site visits were conducted to verify corridor feasibility and gather additional data to assist in prioritizing the trail routes. During the field work, information was gathered on opportunities including connectivity to the bicycle and pedestrian system and adjacent points of interest and on constraints to trail development including corridor crossings, environmental factors and institutional issues.

Importance of the Trail System

Milpitas residents and businesses will directly benefit from the implementation of the Trails Master Plan. An off-street trail system will enhance the quality of life within Milpitas by providing an alternative transportation system, expanding recreational opportunities and improving the environmental conditions of those trail corridors that parallel creeks.

Several of the trail corridors identified in the Trails Master Plan will provide direct, grade-separated routes from home to work, school and shopping. The direct access and lack of street crossings provided by grade separated facilities enhances the convenience of the off-street trail system as compared to the on-street system of bicycle lanes and routes. This added convenience encourages more people to bicycle and walk. The trail system will provide access to Town Center, the Great Mall, all of the major employment centers, numerous schools and parks and the



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planned Tasman Corridor Light Rail stations. In some cities, trails have been identified as factors associated with the economic revitalization of urban centers. Trails providing access to Town Center, Great Mall and McCarthy Ranch may increase patronage at these shopping centers.

The trail system will also connect with two regional trails, the San Francisco Bay Trail and the Bay Area Ridge Trail. These trails provide access to hundreds of areas of open space, much of which is currently unavailable to Milpitas residents for lack of trail connections. Trail corridors can also assist in fulfilling some of the park and recreation deficiencies identified in the *"City of Milpitas Parks and Recreation Facility Needs Study"* (The Planning Collaborative, 1992). The trail system will offer opportunities for walking, jogging, bicycling and nature observation.

Trail development often enhances the environmental conditions of trail corridors through the planting of native vegetation as mitigation. As trails are built, native plants are installed to enhance habitat for wildlife and improve the aesthetic experience for trail users. Tree and shrub plantings also benefit local air quality conditions. Trails may also decrease the dependence on the automobile thereby reducing air emissions and further improving air quality. Many health benefits including improved air quality and expanded opportunities for physical fitness are realized when trails are made available and used by residents and local employees.